



Inquiry into annual and financial reports 2024–25

Answer to question taken on notice

Asked by: Jo Clay MLA

Addressed to: Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development

In relation to: Asbestos and Mr Fluffy class action advice

Hearing: 12 November 2025

Uncorrected Proof Transcript: pp 35-36

Transcript provided: 18 November 2025

Answer Due: 25 November 2025

MS CARRICK: So you say that it was a fair scheme but many people that were involved in that scheme do not believe it was fair. Are you concerned if you compulsory acquired these last properties under just terms that that would open a class action for the other thousand Mr Fluffy homes to get a fair value?

Mr Steel: I think you are asking me for a statement of legal opinion so I cannot provide that answer. But what I would say is that there are a range of options open to lessees right now that do not involve of compulsory acquisition, which is obviously a decision for government to make, that they have and have had for a number of years to be able to remediate their properties and if they wish to move on, which is up to them, and one of the options is not to move on, is to remain in situ within their property that we absolutely understand that people may wish to remain onsite for the future, particularly as they age.

And a number of that we absolutely realise that a number of the remaining lessees, they are in the later stages of their life and so may not wish to make that transition at this particular point in time and we will respect that. We also absolutely understand the trauma associated with the presence of asbestos and finding out about the presence of asbestos in people's homes and that they may have different views about the voluntary buyback scheme and the process that the government undertook to develop the scheme. We absolutely acknowledge that.

But we believe that we had a fair scheme that was quite generous, that was provided based on the 2014 valuations. And there are a range of other options now for those lessees to take. And it is their decision, their financial decision to make, and it will be different in every circumstance. And people will have different views on that, and we respect those views, but we have also tried to provide certainty around the fact that we are not considering compulsory acquisition at this time, and we will re-evaluate that in ...(indistinct)... [10.36.45]

MS CARRICK: How many of 14 want to stay there until they die, and how many want to have their properties compulsory acquired?

Mr Steel: I am not sure that we can comment on that for privacy reasons, but I do not know if you can provide a general view, yes.

Ms Akhter: Yes, but we do engage with the homeowners regularly so we do not have any such knowledge who is interested in either of the options yet but if they are we can take them through the options that we have. But I might just add the task force, and the loose-fill asbestos insulation scheme has been looked at multiple times since 2015 and 2022 and over that lifetime we have had 10 independent audits that were undertaken focusing on the schemes management, buyback phase, assistance phase, demolition phase and the sales phase. You know, these are all available on the website, of course.

THE CHAIR: We probably do not need material on the website.

Ms Akhter: Yes.

MS CARRICK: Yes. No, that is okay. I just want to say that, you know, there is probably only a couple of people that want compulsory acquisition to say that the pathway is to potentially demolish their house, which costs a lot of money and then to sell just the land so they lose—you know, they do not get the benefit of having had a house and the sale value of a house and it is very harsh to leave these people in this situation when it is only just a small amount of them that need to be sorted out.

THE CHAIR: I wonder, minister, can I have a supplementary on this? Have you received advice or been briefed on the risk that Ms Carrick mentioned of class action? You said that was asking for a legal opinion. Can you just tell us if you have received advice about that matter?

Mr Steel: I will take that on that on notice.

THE CHAIR: Excellent.

Chris Steel: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

No.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Environment and Planning

Signature:



Date:

21/11/25

By the Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development, Chris Steel